



Belle Vue and Cornfields School Coronavirus Impact 2021 – 2023 Three year Plan

Briefing Note

Foreword

This briefing note seeks to outline the coronavirus impact experienced by Belle Vue and Cornfields school. During periods of lockdowns the restrictions and requirements for schools were constantly and dynamically changing. Accordingly, this briefing note will make mention of generalised restrictions and will only refer to specifics if relevant.

It is important to state at the head of this briefing note that pupils at Belle Vue and Cornfields school, supported by staff, worked incredibly hard to manage the risks presented by coronavirus and displayed extremely high levels of resilience and courage in their determination to maintain their education. Every one of our pupils should be rightly proud of themselves.

Introduction

During the height of the pandemic the airwaves were alive with constant reference to hundreds and thousands of daily deaths. News bulletin featured coronavirus and the unfolding devastation as the headline news. A sense of doom was felt as a result of the relentless media messages regarding the lethal and indiscriminate nature of the virus. Social media was less restrained and rogue theories, vaccination rumours and falsehoods were freely populated to create further confusion and resulting anxiety.

Many of our pupils experience levels of anxiety higher than most children. They often display rigid thinking and experience difficulty in being able to filter information to logically determine which information is likely to be accurate and reliable.

The coronavirus pandemic has been life changing for many children and has the potential to cause long lasting mental health issues for pupils with SEND.



Belle Vue and Cornfields Approach

In line with our ethos, we considered the individual needs of each pupil as we formulated our control measures to mitigate the risks presented by coronavirus. Our knowledge of the pupils and our strong working relationship with parents, carers and multi-agency partners such as social services, CAMHS, health and care colleagues allowed us to work in partnership to jointly agree the most appropriate way to maintain education during the national lockdown.

Neither Cornfields or Belle Vue closed during the lockdown. The schools remained fully open throughout and welcomed all pupils who could attend physically. We worked with partner agencies to actively encourage any pupils who were on child protection plans, child in need plans or being supported by early help to physically attend school. We also prioritised pupils who were looked after or who had a social worker supporting the family to again physically attend school.

Belle Vue school opened in January 2021, a time when schools had been ordered to shut by government, albeit that specialist schools were encouraged to remain open. The majority of pupils who came onto roll at Belle Vue physically attended school daily. Two pupils who, due to high anxiety, took time to coax into school. Both pupils were fearful of contracting coronavirus but despite this we managed to get both pupils into the school prior to school closing for the school holidays. In one instance a member of staff collected the pupil and, following a number of home visits and mentoring sessions, they managed to encourage the child into the school.

At Cornfields, some pupils engaged in remote learning, but many pupils physically attended school. Bespoke timetables were formulated for every single pupil to ensure, regardless of whether they were learning from home or in school, that their education and contact with staff and peers was maintained. The curriculum was reviewed and adapted. A recovery curriculum was created and delivered. A coronavirus risk assessment was created.

Pupils working remotely generally had 1:1 online contact with their teacher at least once a day via Zoom or Google Classrooms. There was variance where circumstance or antecedents called for this frequency to be increased or decreased. Remote learners also had work set which would then be collectively marked with all pupils in a Zoom or Google Classroom session.

Strong working relationships with parents and carers was essential in ensuring the bespoke timetable for pupils remained fit for purpose and we adjusted timetables as necessary.

Pupils physically attending school experienced obvious changes to the normal routine as we engaged in strong coronavirus control measures. Windows were kept ajar, hard surfaces



were treated with antibacterial spray regularly, distances were maintained and staff wore face masks/shields. Lunch was taken in classrooms in order to maintain bubbles and staff worked with their 'bubble' and not across the school.

Daily staff debriefs paid particular attention to any pupil whose mental health appeared to be adversely affected by the pandemic or the control measures we were taking. Where indications arose, these were addressed immediately in consultation with parents and carers to ensure our pupils were properly safeguarded, irrespective of their location.

Since September 2022 many of the 'tight' measures have been relaxed but for some of our pupils adjustments to pre-covid measures will take time. For example several pupils continue to choose to wear face masks.

Measures of Success

Throughout the pandemic our pupils have been inquisitive and have asked many questions about coronavirus. We have been transparent and honest in our responses whilst addressing any anxieties held by pupils.

Pupils have maintained their learning and significant progress can be evidenced through outcomes. Belle Vue and Cornfields pupils achieved over 7000 AQA Awards Certificates, won awards for their contribution to a sculpture and poem for an anti-knife crime project run by the police and physically sat English and maths exams.

School Outcomes 2020 – 2021

	Belle Vue	Cornfields
English Language, GCSE	3	2
English Literature	1	0
Maths, GCSE	1	1
English, Functional 1	/	2
Maths, Functional 1	1	5
Maths, Functional 2	1	0
English, Step-Up Entry Level 1	2	1
Maths, Entry Level 3	2	1



Combined Science GCSE (Double Award)	1	0
St. John's Ambulance, First Aid	3	23
Food Hygiene, Level 1	7	38
Hospitality and Catering Level 2	1	0
Mechanics Level 3 Diploma	1	0
Construction Entry level	1	0
LAMDA	/	1
AQA Award Certificates	343	2125

School Outcomes 2021 – 2022

	Belle Vue	Cornfields
English Language, GCSE	0	2
Maths, GCSE	0	2
English, Step-Up Entry Level 1	2	0
Maths, Entry Level 3	7	0
Food Hygiene, Level 1	14	0
Hospitality and Catering Level 2	0	0
Mechanics Level 3 Diploma	0	0
Construction Entry level	0	0
LAMDA	0	0
AQA Award Certificates	1910	2977

During the Summer breaks, pupils were given the opportunity to attend various activities in school to maintain the school culture and belonging whilst minimising the likelihood of social exclusion or being drawn to negative influences. Activities were determined according to the pupils present and included pupils purchasing a train ticket themselves (staff monitoring but standing back) and taking tea and scones in Tunbridge Wells to improve their life skills. Other pupils with an interest in construction were assigned building site responsibilities and



built a garden office at Cornfields school to improve their experience of working in this area and to provide them with evidence for a CV.

The implications of a protracted period of time where children were required to be isolated is likely to have an impact not just in the short time but also the long term. Many pupils regressed whilst others thrived in an environment where they could access learning remotely or with very focused intervention in the school. The parameters of what was traditional 'normal' teaching in a classroom shifted. Making adjustments to returning to school and society for many of our pupils has been a challenge. Meeting individual needs and being adaptive is key to our approach.

Next Steps

1. We have produced and are delivering a recovery curriculum in response to the covid pandemic. This Plan is available on the website or available on request. We are currently in phase 7 of the recovering the curriculum. Our approach to the curriculum is to develop a progressive and broad curriculum, underpinned with rigour, and a focus on building on prior knowledge to ensure pupils have learnt and remembered key components.
2. We work effectively with parents/carers and other stakeholders to ensure support is identified, targeted and rapid solutions are put in place to support academic, social and emotional progress for pupils.
3. We will ensure the curriculum has breadth and experiences beyond the academic with a deliberate exposure to knowledge and experiences to level up the outcomes and life chances for our pupils.

Summary

The nature and scale of the coronavirus pandemic is unheard of in our generation and has the potential to limit an individual's ability to function and thrive as would be expected.

Our pupils are particularly vulnerable to adverse effects due to their often heightened anxiety, hyper-vigilance and difficulties with applying reason to external influences.

Despite this increased vulnerability, our pupils have shown amazing resilience. They have asked questions, shared concerns and have worked together to allow themselves to continue with their education and not be diverted by coronavirus.



Pupils' progress is supported by data tracking, Awards certificates and exam grades, however, the clearest measure of success is that pupils are happy and are displaying no negative effects associated with the pandemic.

Parents were invited to complete questionnaires in order that the school could evaluate their views. Overwhelmingly this was positive.

We will continue to track and monitor the impact of coronavirus to ensure that the curriculum adapts to our pupils and secures our intended end point of improving life chances. We are proud of our pupils, and they should be rightly proud of themselves.